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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY : GERMANY (Soviet Zone)

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SUBJECT : Dismantling of the Leuna Plant, Merseburg, Germany

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DATE OF INFORMATION 25X1

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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1. The dismantling of the Leuna Plant in Merseburg, Thuringia, Germany (Soviet Zone), was initiated in March 1946.

25X1

In July 1946, part of the operation had been completed and some of the dismantled material had already been crated and shipped to the USSR. The dismantling operations were directed by Soviet officers. Captain Vostikov was the Soviet officer in charge. Villesov, who at that time was the General Manager of Leuna, did not seem to have any jurisdiction over Vostikov's operations. Apparently the orders for the dismantling operation came directly from Moscow. It appeared that Villesov was not on friendly terms with Vostikov. This was understandable because Villesov had been ordered to make Leuna operational as soon as possible and Vostikov was thwarting his efforts by removing equipment which was needed for the achievement of Villesov's goal.

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2. Some of the following statements regarding dismantled Leuna equipment and its disposition in the USSR are based on deductions rather than actual knowledge.

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The dismantled equipment was distributed as follows:

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25X1

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FORM NO. 51-4F OCT 1951

25X1

(20)

(a) The pilot plant for the production of oxol was dismantled and probably taken to Dzerzhinsk, USSR (56° 15' N - 43° 28' E).

(b) The pilot plant for the production of synol was probably taken to Dzerzhinsk.

(c) The pilot plant for hydrocarbon synthesis was probably taken to Dzerzhinsk.

(d) The pilot plant for oil cracking with a catalyst volume of one cubic meter was taken to Dzerzhinsk.

(e) The pilot plant for the production of caprolactam was shipped to Dzerzhinsk, where Dr Striegler was commissioned to put it into operation.

(f) The bench scale installation of a reactor for the production of diethyl-amine and its separation from monoethyl-amine and triethyl-amine, was shipped to the Karpov Institute in Moscow. Dr Friedrich Andreas was working with it in the Institute. The reactor had a catalyst volume of 200-300 cubic centimeters.

(g) A bench scale model of an installation for the production of hydrogen peroxide from propane oxidation was shipped to the Karpov Institute. Dr Helmuth Jochinke was to operate it there, but to my knowledge he never had the opportunity.

3. The following large installations were dismantled:

(a) The adipic acid plant, including the section which produced hexamethylene diamine, was dismantled. These installations were housed in building 479 and had a capacity of about 30 tons of hexamethylene diamine per month. I assume that this plant was shipped to Dzerzhinsk.

(b) The entire ammonia oxidation plant was dismantled and shipped to Severo-Donetsk (48° 53' N - 38° 40' E).

25X1
(c) About 75% of the Catalyst Plant South was dismantled. [redacted] part of this plant was shipped to Severo-Donetsk
25X1 and believe that some of it may have been sent to Chirchik
(41° 30' N - 69° 37' E), where a plant for the production
25X1 of heavy water catalysts is planned. The method of production proposed for this plant is patterned after that at Leuna except that the Leuna flow of production is vertical while the Chirchik flow is to be horizontal.

(d) The plant producing highly concentrated nitric acid was completely dismantled, until only the masonry remained. The plant was probably shipped to Severo-Donetsk. From remarks made by the General Manager of the Severo-Donetsk plant, Genadij Ivanovitch Villesov, we learned that the production of highly concentrated nitric acid was planned there.

(e) The methanol plant was almost completely dismantled. [redacted] it is probable that
25X1 the methanol and isobutanol production was intended to take
25X1 place at Severo-Donetsk.

(f) Thirty-four percent of the ammonia plant was dismantled and shipped to Severo-Donetsk.

(g) An unidentified number of steam boilers which produced 50 tons of steam per hour were shipped to the USSR.

(h) Sixty-five percent of the hydrogenation plant was dismantled.

(i) The dehydrogenation plant (olefin plant) was completely dismantled.

(j) The heavy water installation operating at atmospheric pressure was dismantled and possibly placed in a building near the Agricultural Exhibition Grounds in Moscow.

(k) The heavy water installation operating at 700 atmospheres was taken to the Karpov Institute where it was being installed when we left in July 1948.

(l) The ammonium sulfate plant was partly dismantled and shipped to Severo-Donetsk. Drawings and plans of the Leuna Plant were placed in the files of the library there.

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4. [redacted] identified the following equipment of other plants:

(a) [redacted] lead containers at Rubezhnoye, which were used as stirring vessels for sulphuric acid. They had been dismantled from the chemical plant at Wolfen, Germany.

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(b) [redacted] the Soviets have installed a plant for the production of hexogen in installation No 20 at the explosive plant at Yushnaya Gruppa (in the vicinity of Severo-Donetsk). German prisoners of war who worked at Yushnaya Grupa saw the installation, which is said to have been dismantled from Christianstadt. During World War II, the plant had been badly destroyed, but [redacted] saw fumes coming from the one smokestack which was still intact. The plant is electrically powered by a line leading from Proletarsk (48° 56' N - 38° 24' E) to the plant.

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5. In addition to these installations of industrial or scientific significance, the Soviets removed almost all glasses and measuring instruments from all laboratories. Most of the glasses we used in the Karpov Institute laboratories were those which had been dismantled from Leuna. At the Karpov Institute we found a hand-operated tablet machine which pressed the catalyst powder into firm tablets and which had formerly been used at Leuna.

6. The Leuna library was almost completely removed. [redacted] a large number of Leuna books at Severo-Donetsk; most of the Leuna reports and pamphlets were directed to the Karpov Institute. While the librarian at Severo-Donetsk, Mrs Villesov, was doing a capable job of cataloguing the books, the printed material at the Karpov Institute was dumped into sacks onto the floor and stuffed in the top of shelves of the library. (At the canteen we were given food which was wrapped in old and historically valuable reports of Leuna's origin.) In addition to Leuna material, we found a large assortment of literature at Severo-Donetsk from factories at Heydebreck (50° 20' N - 18° 12' E) and Piesteritz in Saxony. Both are chemical factories and the presence of their literature at Severo-Donetsk permitted some speculation as to the planned production of this plant. The Heydebreck factory was not quite finished at the end of World War II, but the production of urea, brown-oxide catalyst and end products by the Fischer-Tropsch process was planned. Lacquers, oil and ammonia were produced at Piesteritz.

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7. The dismantling operations were carried out with reasonably good care. The crates which were used were made of planks two inches thick and reinforced on the outside; on the inside they were lined with tar paper. All rust was removed from the equipment, which was then coated with protective paint and crated. In many cases, the German workers saw to it that the Soviets did not get the best equipment. They persuaded the Soviet officers to take along worthless equipment, hid valuable machines under rubble laying about in the plant, and disguised defects on some of the material and thereby deceived the Soviets as to its condition. Most of the equipment probably arrived in the USSR in fairly good condition but in the unloading processes and the lack of proper care in installation and usage, much of the equipment was spoiled. As late as 1948, some of the Leuna equipment had not been installed in the Karpov Institute and was standing in the open, unprotected. A vast area at Severo-Donetsk was surrounded by barbed wire, in which dismantled Leuna equipment was exposed to the Soviet climate.

8. While the dismantling was still going on, German engineers began to rebuild the Leuna Plant. Equipment was found in various places, partly under the debris and partly in storage, where a large amount of small equipment had been kept in reserve. In this manner the plant was gradually put back on an operational basis. The laboratories had the greatest difficulty in resuming their operations. Even the desks of the deported scientists had been removed. In fact, the laboratories never entirely recovered from the dismantling operations. For example, the Research Laboratory, which previously was staffed by more than 30 academically trained scientists, now has but six or eight. Furthermore, the Research Laboratory scientists lack the zest to promote their work because most of the projects on which they work are for the benefit of the Soviets.

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